

["Myer"]

[?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER E. Verschleiser

ADDRESS 1419 Jesup Ave. New York

DATE Nov. 23, 1938

SUBJECT YIDDISH FOLKLORE - "MYER"

1. Date and time of Interview Nov. 19
2. Place of interview Cafe' Royal, 2nd Ave.
3. Name and address of informant "Myer" - An interesting character who mingles with literary circles.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

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NAME OF WORKER E. Verschleiser

ADDRESS 1419 Jesup Ave.

DATE Nov. 23, 1938

SUBJECT YIDDISH FOLKLORE- "MEYER" TALKING ABOUT SUPERSTITIONS

I, of course, don't believe in superstitions, myself. Although when I was a young boy and used to go to "Chedar" (a school where Jewish children are taught Hebrew) I was afraid to pass a lumber yard. I don't remember how I got the notion but I thought that a "shed" (Jewish name for a evil spirit) hid there behind the nooks. I heard of many superstitions in our little town.- When somebody died in a house, nobody should sit on the doorstep for months afterwards because he'll hear the moaning of the dead man's spirit. Or that a person must not look at a mirror in the dark or he will see his soul there. Or that everytime one sees a falling star, it means that someone died and his soul is going up to heaven. Or my grandfather used to admonish me not to whistle or I would call all the evil spirits together.

My father told me the following story that happened to him. He was going home to the village with two cans of whiskey in his hands. The distance from the town to the village was a few miles. He covered this road many times. It became dark. He was going and going and the road seemed never to end. About 2 a mile from the village was an old empty inn with broken windows. When he reached the inn and looked up at it, he saw lights in

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the inn and in every window stood a man and clapped his hands, like in a dance. My father became so frightened that he could not move. But then he dropped the whiskey and began running and ran all the way home. When he came in he fell down and fainted. I heard him tell this story many times and I, myself, felt a shiver over my back everytime he told it.

***** A MAN TALKS ABOUT THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER

She knew that she was going to die. I'll never forget it. "Meyer", she told me, "promise me... I know that you are a modern ("a heint-weltiger" meaning literally a man of the world of today) and whether you believe or don't believe, promise me that you'll say "Kadish" (prayer for the dead). She lay very quietly and looked at me. Just looked at me. She was very quiet.

[????] [????????] [????????] [????????] [????????] [????????]